

Weird, Spooky, Supernatural Stories

The

BEYOND

ACE

JUNE 10c

I'LL HAVE TO KEEP RIGHT ON,
SO THE GRAVE WILL BE READY
TOMORROW MORN — — WHAT!
WHAT ARE THESE LIVING
HANDS COMING OUT OF
THE EARTH?



"There's no such animal,"

he cried!



MY FRIEND and I were picking the ponies one day when I started telling him about a sure thing I heard about.

"You say it pays four bucks for every three?" he asked.

"Yep," I replied.

"And can't lose? It automatically wins? Must be illegal!"

"Not a bit," I replied. "In fact, the government very much approves..."

"Our government approves of a horse who can't lose..."

"Who said anything about a horse?" I asked.

"So what else could it be but a horse..."

"It not only could be—but is—U. S. Savings Bonds," was my prompt reply. "The surest thing running on any track today."

"For every three dollars you invest in U. S. Savings Bonds you get four dollars back after only ten years. And if you're a member of the Payroll Savings Plan—which means you buy bonds automatically from your paycheck—they can amount to an awful lot of money when you're not looking. Hey, what are you doing?"

"Thinking up my riding form! The horse I'm betting on from now on is U. S. Savings Bonds."

Automatic saving is sure saving—U.S. Savings Bonds



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VERA'S PROTESTS, THE MYSTERIOUS CANDLES WERE MISTAKEN, THAT NIGHT...

WROTE UP OUT OF BED! SHE — F THAT SAME GHASTLY CHANGE HAD COME OVER HER AGAIN! SHE'S LIT ONE OF THOSE EVIL CANDLES AND ONCE MORE BECOME A WITCH!



THOSE LITTLE FLAME DEVILS SEEM TO BE LEADING HER DOWN STAIRS! I'VE GOT TO FOLLOW! NOW I KNOW THIS ISN'T JUST A HALLUCINATION! THE CANDLES COULDN'T AFFECT ME FROM THIS DISTANCE! IT'S REALLY HAPPENING!



SHE'S HEADING TOWARD THE OLD DRY-UP WELL!



VERA! WAIT! DON'T JUMP INTO THE WELL!

TOO LATE! SHE'S DONE IT! IF ONLY SHE ISN'T HURT TOO BADLY!



SHE'S NOT HERE! I KNOW I SAW HER LEAP! WHERE COULD SHE HAVE GONE?



BOY WELDED CLIMBED DOWN THE WELL, SEARCHED FOR SOME SECRET EXIT THAT VERA MIGHT HAVE USED, BUT FOUND NONE. THEN, LATER...

NO WAY SHE COULD HAVE GOTTEN OUT OF THE WELL WITHOUT ME SEEING HER! YET SHE'S GONE! I MAY NEVER SEE HER AGAIN! MY ONLY HOPE IS TO SEARCH THE HOUSE. SHE MIGHT HAVE GOTTEN BACK INSIDE, IN SOME MYSTERIOUS WAY!



A SEARCH OF THE HOUSE FAILED TO FIND VERA. FINALLY, NOT FELL INTO EXHAUSTED, TERROR-STRUCK SLUMBER.

HA-HA-HA! CACKLE - CACKLE!





MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE MANSION, VERA'S POWER
AT ITS SUMMIT...

YOUR PLAGUED HUSBAND STILL LIVES, VERA / I FAILED
TO KILL HIM, WHILE ASSASSINATING YOUR HUMAN FORM,
PRETENDING TO BE YOU / FALLING UPON THE DAGGER
BROKE THE SPELL, AND NOW I MUST GO THROUGH THE
MYSTIC CEREMONY TO ACQUIRE YOUR YOUTH AND
LOVELINESS, ONCE MORE /

AND YOU STILL MUST DIE, IF I AM TO KEEP YOUR
FORM FOREVER / WHILE YOU'RE MARRIED TO A
MORTAL, MY POWERS OVER YOU ARE LIMITED /
FLAME DEMONS, PREPARE FOR THE EXCHANGE
CEREMONY /



BY THE DEMONIC POWERS OF THE
BLACK MAGIC CANDLES, I COMMAND
THAT YOU WILL NOW TAKE MY FORM
AND I WILL TAKE ON ALL YOUR
YOUTH BEAUTY /

I CAN FEEL THE SUPERNATURAL
POWERS WORKING / I AM GETTING
YOUNGER, MORE BEAUTIFUL /
AND YOU ARE AGING, GRAY-
ELING /

OOOOHHH /

THOUGHT I AM NOT ABLE TO FOOL
NOT WIELDING INTO THINKING I'M
HIS WIFE, VERA, I MUST STILL
FIGURE SOME WAY TO KILL HIM
WITH MY ENCHANTED DAGGER,
SO THAT VERA WILL BE RE-
LEASED FROM MORTAL CONTACT
AND OUR EXCHANGE OF FORMS
WILL BE ETERNAL /



AT THIS MOMENT, OUTSIDE...

I'M GLAD I DECIDED TO COME BACK TO THE FARM /
THE ANSWER TO ALL THIS MYSTERY MUST BE SOME-
WHERE IN THAT GRID OF OLD WELLS, SINCE IT WAS
THERE THAT I LAST SAW VERA /

THERE MUST BE A SECRET EXIT FROM THE
BOTTOM OF THE WELL / VERA COULDN'T HAVE
JUST VANISHED INTO THIN AIR, LAST NIGHT /





MY PROBING THE WALLS HAS
STARTED A CAVE-IN! NOW I'M
REALLY IN FOR IT!



A SECRET DOOR / MY LUNING
AGAINST THE WALL TO AVOID THE
CAVE-IN, FORCED IT OPEN / THIS
IS WHERE VERA WENT!



THE DOOR SLAMMED SHUT
BEHIND ME / THE CAVE-IN
HAS PILED DIRT AGAINST IT
ON THE OTHER SIDE SO IT
WON'T EVEN BOOGIE / NOW
I'M TRAPPED!



HERE!
IT'S NOT
WELDING!

YES / AND WHOEVER YOU
ARE, YOU DON'T FOOL ME FOR
A MOMENT, EVEN THOUGH YOU
DO LOOK LIKE VERA! WHERE
IS MY WIFE?



COME BACK HERE / YOU CAN'T GET AWAY FROM
ME! I'LL MAKE YOU TELL ME WHAT'S
HAPPENED TO VERA!

IF I CAN LURE HIM UPSTAIRS,
I CAN TRAP HIM THERE!



HERE'S YOUR WIFE, BOY! LOOK AT
HER! ISN'T SHE BEAUTIFUL?

I THINK I'VE GOT THE
ANSWER, NOW / YOU'RE VERA'S
OLD WITCH ANCESTOR AND BY
SOME HELLISH TRICK, YOU'VE
EXCHANGED FORMS WITH HER!



YES / THEY ALL THOUGHT I DIED WHEN I FELL
INTO THE OLD WELL, SEVERAL HUNDRED YEARS
AGO / BUT THOSE WITH THE POWER OF WITCH-
CRAFT DON'T DIE SO EASILY!

VERA DARLING / GOT TO GET
YOU OUT OF THIS DEMON'S
CHAMBER / THE SPELL, OVER
YOU MIGHT BE BROKEN!



TRUE TALES of the SUPERNATURAL

23

NOT TOO MANY YEARS AGO, IN THE LAMENHOUSE SECTION OF LONDON, CYRUS WATTS RAN A MODERATE ENTERPRISE OF MONEY-LENDING. ALTHOUGH WATTS ACCUMULATED A SMALL FORTUNE ON THE BELL LUCK OF HIS FELLOW CITIZENS, HE LIVED THE LIFE OF A RECLUSE IN HIS SMALL SHOP, HIS PASSION FOR EXISTENCE HAD TURNED HIS ENTIRE LIFE INTO A SYSTEM OF DOLLARS AND CENTS. A GOLD COIN HAD REPLACED HIS HEART! ONE RAINY NIGHT, A MASCARE FIGURE RANPED ON HIS SHOP DOOR.



WELL, WHAT IS IT? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

FOOD, KIND SIR? I'M DYING OF STARVATION! O'GODDAMN!



FOOD COSTS MONEY, TOO FOOL! IF YOU'RE GOING TO DIE, DO IT IN THE GUTTER WHERE YOU BELONG!

CURSE YOU, MURDERER! YOU WILL BURN IN HADES! O'GODDAMN!

THE MAN WAS FOUND DEAD THE NEXT MORNING IN FRONT OF WATTS' SHOP. WATTS WENT ABOUT HIS BUSINESS AS USUAL THAT DAY, BUT THE CURSE OF THE DYING MAN REMAINED IN HIS EAR.



AH, A CUSTOMER! I MUSTN'T THINK OF THAT FOOL AND HIS CURSE! I... WHAT WAS THAT?



CYRUS WATTS! ARE YOU PREPARED TO FULFILL THE CURSE? THE DEVIL IS WAITING FOR YOU IN HADES!

NO! NO! I DON'T WANT TO DIE! HERE, HERE IS MONEY... LOTS OF IT! GO AWAY! A SPECIES!



HERE, YOU FOOL, FEED ON THIS FLAME!

FIRE SPREAD RAPIDLY THROUGHOUT THE OLD SHOP. CYRUS, HARDLY SCRAMBLING ABOUT IN AN EFFORT TO COLLECT HIS FORTUNE, BUT THE FLAMES HAD GOTTEN THEIR WORK! THE WICK WAS TRAPPED IN A BLENDING INTERLUDE—



MY MONEY! MY GOLD! I MUST SAVE IT! AAAAAAAAAH!

A TERRIBLE INCIDENT HAD ACTUALLY SEEN THE CURSE OF A DYING MAN COME TRUE! THE FLAMES HAD SHIPPED OUT THE LIFE OF A WRETCH WHO THOUGH WEALTHY HAD MORE WICKEDNESS THAN GIVING A HAND TO A LEECH FORTUNATE HUMAN BEING! ANOTHER OVERPLAYED MYSTERY IN THE ANNALS OF THE SUPERNATURAL!

VICTIMS of the Twin Scourges

THEY WERE A WILD AND LARNEY COUPLE, LYDA JORDAN AND SIMON SNAKE, ALWAYS IN AND OUT OF TROUBLE WITH THE LAW. NOW CAME THE SNOW-FILLED NIGHT WHEN, CAREERING THROUGH A VILLAGE AT BREAKNECK SPEED IN SIMON'S SCRAPED-UP CONVERTIBLE THEY RAN DOWN AN ELDERLY MAN, AND IN SPITE OF HIS BARELL SCREAMS FOR HELP, THEY LEFT HIM TO DIE. A FEW MINUTES LATER, THE TWO HEARTLESS HIT-AND-RUN DRIVERS REALIZED THAT THIS WAS ONE JAM THEY'D HAVE TROUBLE TALKING THEIR WAY OUT OF. THEY DECIDED TO KEEP MOVING, RUN AWAY FROM THEIR CRIME. THEN, A FEW MILES DOWN THE ROAD THEY CAME UPON A ROADBLOCK, STAGED BY THE GUARDIES RIGHT OUT OF SATAN'S OWN HANDBOOK!

WHAT A WEIRD-LOOKING BUNCH OF DWARFS! PROBABLY SIDE-SHOW FREAKS FROM SOME NEARBY CARNIVAL -- TRYING TO SCARE PEOPLE FORCED TO STOP FOR THIS DETOUR ROAD BLOCK!

WHY THEY GIVE ME THE SHIVERS! HURRY UP AND TURN DOWN THAT POKE THAT DON'T BLOCKED OFF, SIMON! LET'S GET AWAY FROM HERE!

TO SEE A STRANGE SIGHT, TAKE THE ROAD TO THE RIGHT!

DETOUR

BECAUSE THIS SIGN WE KEPT HIDDEN, DOWN THE WRONG ROAD THEY'VE HIDDEN!

YES! THEY SPEED THROUGH THE GLOOM, TO MEET THEIR OWN DOOM!

I HAVE A STRANGE FEELING THAT WE SHOULDN'T HAVE TAKEN THIS ROAD, SIMON! MAYBE THOSE HIDEOUS LITTLE DWARFS WEREN'T -- SIMON! STOP!

GREAT GRIEF! THE ROAD ENDS AT THAT CLIFF EDGE! WE'RE GOING TOO FAR! CAN'T STOP IN TIME!



WITH THE FIRST SCREAMS
AGAINST THE PRESSURE OF
BRAKES JAMMED ON TOO LATE,
THE CAR CRASHED THROUGH THE
BARRIER AND HURLED OFF THE
CLIFF-EDGE



WE ARE THE SPIRITS OF
EVIL, AND ONCE EACH YEAR,
ON DEVIL'S EVE, WE HOLD A
CONCLAVE HERE!



TO CHARGE HUMAN
GUILTY OF CRIME, INTO
SUPERNATURAL CREATURES
TIL THE END OF TIME!

OH, MASTER DEMON, TO YOUR
EVIL BARN, WE ADD WOLF'S
HEAD AND BAT WINGS-- AND
ALL KINDS OF POWERFUL,
SUPERNATURAL THINGS!



AS THE MYSTIC
POTION WILL SOON BE
AT FULL STRENGTH,
READY TO ADMINISTER
TO THIS YEAR'S
VICTIMS?

WHAT EVIL, DEATH-LIKE SHAPE THEY WILL
TAKE, WE NEVER KNOW UNTIL AFTER THE POTION
STARTS TO WORK! MALA-KOOLA-MALA-NO!
ALL THE BLACK POWER OF EVIL IS NOW GROWING
STRONGER IN THIS, BURBLING, BOILING WIT!



IT IS NOW TIME
TO GIVE THESE EVIL
HUMANS THE DEVIL'S
DOSE THAT WILL
CHARGE THEM INTO
ANOTHER FORM!



HURRY, HURRY! WE
CAN HARDLY WAIT TO
SEE THE KIND OF HORROR
CREATURES THEY SO
SOON WILL BE!

FEEL DIZZY--SICK!
WHERE--WHERE AM I?
WHAT HAPPENED?

LOOK, LOOK! THAT'RE
NOW AWARE! SOON THE
POTION, ITS HOLD WILL
TAKE!



LYDIA! SHE - SHE'S
CHANGING INTO SOMETHING
UNHUMAN! THIS IS SHASTLY!





LYDIA / YOU'VE BECOME A-VAMPIRE? STAY AWAY FROM ME!

YOU, TOO, ARE CHANGING, SIMON! LOOK AT YOURSELF!



THEY'VE TURNED INTO VAMPIRE AND WEREWOLF CREATURES! OH, LOOK AT THEIR INHUMAN, FIERCE FEATURES!

LYDIA, WE'RE DOOMED! WE'RE BEING PUNISHED FOR RUNNING AND LEAVING THAT OLD MAN TO HIS DEATH!



A FEW MINUTES LATER, AS THE FIRST RAYS OF DAWN PIERCED THE SUMMIT...

THE FIRST SIGN OF FEARFUL, SOFT-LIGHT BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE, SET OUT OF SIGHT!

LOOK! THEY ARE BURNING AWAY! THEY SEEM TO BE VANISHING RIGHT INTO THE DARK SHADOWS!



SIMON! YOU'RE CHANGING AGAIN! YOU LOOK LESS LIKE A WERE-WOLF EVERY SECOND!

THE SAME WITH YOU, MYBE WITH DAWN, AND THE WASHING OF THOSE EVIL SPIRITS, THEIR SPELL OVER US IS BROKEN!



IN ANOTHER FEW MOMENTS, BOTH WERE CHANGED BACK INTO THEIR HUMAN FORM AGAIN!

IT'S YOUR FAULT THAT ALL THIS HAPPENED, SIMON! YOU ALWAYS LED ME INTO THESE WILD ESCAPADES!

IT WAS YOUR IDEA TO RUN OFF AND LEAVE THAT OLD MAN TO DIE! LOOK! HIGHWAY POLICE LOOKING DOWN AT OUR WRECKED CAR!



WE'VE GOT TO RUN FOR IT! THE POLICE WILL FIND THAT HIT-RUN KILLING ON US, IF THEY CATCH US!

ONCE WE GET OUT OF THIS MESS, I'M THROUGH WITH YOU FOREVER, SIMON!



WHEN I THOUGHT WE'D NEVER GET OUT OF THOSE WOODS!

THAT'S A NORTH-BOUND EXPRESS! LET'S BOARD IT! THEN WE'LL BE SAFE FROM PURSUIT BY LOCAL POLICE, AT LEAST!

NOW, A STRANGE THING HAD HAPPENED, AS THOUGH THEIR EXPERIENCE IN THE COUNTRY HAD FORGED THEM OF ALL EVIL, NEITHER ONE COULD STAND THE SIGHT OF THE OTHER, NOR THE MEMORY OF THEIR PAST EVIL DEEDS TOGETHER.

ALL RIGHT / SHUT UP / WHEN THIS TRAIN GETS TO NEW YORK IN THE MORNING, WE'LL SEPARATE--FOREVER /

THE SOONER THE BETTER /



I AM, THOUGH, AT DARKNESS FEEL.

LYDIA / IT-IT'S HAPPENING AGAIN TO YOU / YOU'RE CHANGING / OH / YOUR TEETH / YOUR EYES /

AND YOU'RE BECOMING A WERE-WOLF ONCE MORE / IT-IT'S THE DARKNESS / AS SOON AS THE SUN SETS, WE START TO CHANGE /



WE GOT OUT OF THAT COACH BEFORE ANYBODY NOTICED / WE'LL BE SAFE HERE IN THE Pullman SECTION, UNTIL BEDTIME, ANTHONY /

I-I FEEL SO STRANGE, LYDIA / FULL OF WEIRD URGES AND DESIRES /



I'LL HAVE TO GET THE PORTER TO... EEEETAIN /

I MUST SATISFY MY MAD CRAVING / STAND STILL, FOOLISH WOMAN /



MY WIFE / THAT-THAT CREATURE'S ATTACKING HER /

I, TOO, FEEL THE URGE TO ATTACK / THE HUSBAND SHALL BE MY VICTIM /



AS THE TRAIN WHISTLE SCREAMED AND THE WHEELS RUMBLER THROUGH THE BLACK, STILL NIGHT, THE EYE CREATURES THAT LYDIA AND ANTHONY HAD BECOME, CROUCHED OVER THEIR VICTIMS, LIKE WILD BEASTS AT THE KILL.



WE WORKED WELL TOGETHER, LYDIA, MY VAMPIRE FRIEND! LET'S FORGET OUR BILLY HUMAN DIFFERENCES AND TEAR UP AGAIN!

AGREED! QUICKLY! LET US FIND MORE VICTIMS! I AM NOT YET SATISFIED!

GOOD HEAVENS! LOOK AT THEIR THROATS! SOME WILD BEAST MUST BE LOOSE ON THE TRAIN! WE'D BETTER HUNT HIM DOWN!

I- I'LL GET THE TRAIN DETECTIVE!



THERE ARE THE CALIFRITS! A-A VAMPIRE AND A WEREWOLF! SHOOT THEM DOWN!

GO! WHAT HEEDOUS CREATURES!

THEIR BULLETS DO NOT SEEM TO BOTHER EITHER LYDIA NOR I! STILL, WE'D BEST AVOID CAPTURE!

A DOZEN BULLETS STRUCK THE CURSED BEASTS-- YET THEY DON'T FALTER!



DRIVEN BY THEIR FURORS, THE TWO WEREN'T CLIMBED TO THE ROOF OF THE TRAIN.

WE'RE SAFE UP HERE, UNTIL WE REACH NEW YORK! IN THAT LARGE CITY, WE'LL BE ABLE TO HUNT DOWN MANY VICTIMS TOGETHER, MY DEAR SIMON!



HEATER, AS THE TRAIN ENTERED THE GREAT CITY AT DAWN.

WE'VE CHANGED BACK TO HUMANS ONCE MORE! IT SEEMS WE ARE CURSED TO BE MONSTER-CREATURES ONLY DURING THE DARK OF NIGHT!

IT'S A TERRIBLE THING, SIMON! HOW COULD WE HAVE BEEN SUCH MONSTRIOUS BEASTS LAST NIGHT! OH, IF ONLY YOU HADN'T GOTTEN ME INTO THIS!



THE TRAIN'S SLOWED FOR THE RIVER TUNNEL, NOW'S OUR CHANCE TO GET OFF!

YES, AND THEN I'M BEING THE LAST OF YOU! PERHAPS IF WE SEPARATE, THE CURSE UPON US BOTH WILL BE BROKEN!



THAT NIGHT, IN A DIMLY LIT
DARK FURNISHED ROOM, LONG
AFTER HE AND LYDIA DEPARTED,
SIMON DREAMED ANXIOUSLY
BEFORE HIS WEDDING...

IT IS NOW LONG AFTER DARK, YET
I HAVEN'T CHANGED INTO A
WEREWOLF AGAIN! LYDIA WAS
RIGHT ABOUT US DEPARTING!
THE SPELL HAS BROKEN! THANK
GOODNESS! NOW THAT I'VE BEEN
SAVED, I'LL NEVER AGAIN DO
EVIL! I'LL LIVE A GOOD LIFE!



THREE WEEKS NOW, SINCE I'VE
LEFT LYDIA, OF BEING A NORMAL
HUMAN BEING--EVEN AT NIGHT!
I'VE GOT A GOOD JOB, MET A
NICE GIRL, EVERYTHING'S
PERFECT ONCE MORE!



THAT NIGHT...
SIMON, DARLING, YOU'RE LIKE
A NEW MAN, LATELY! NOT
QUIET AND BROODING LIKE
WHEN I FIRST MET
YOU!

I AM A NEW
MAN, HONEY! MAYBE.
SOME DAY I'LL TELL
YOU THE SECRET
OF THAT!



LATER, THAT SAME EVENING...

THIS SHOULD BE A WONDERFUL
PARTY TONIGHT, SIMON!
SEVERAL NEW COUPLES
WE'VE NEVER MET
WILL BE THERE!

I DON'T CARE WHO
ELSE IS THERE!
I'LL ONLY HAVE EYES
FOR YOU!



AND THIS IS PETER BEAUMONT
AND LYDIA JENSEN.
THEY...

LYDIA!



ON SOME FLAMBY PRETEXT, SIMON TOOK LYDIA
TO ANOTHER ROOM OF THE APARTMENT...

AND SO, YOU SEE, FOR JANE'S
SAKE, I CAN'T LET ANYTHING
HAPPEN! WE'VE GOT TO
GET OUT OF HERE!

OF COURSE I
FEEL THE SAME
WAY ABOUT PETER!
WE CAN'T TAKE A
CHANCE ON OUR BEING
TOGETHER BRINGING
BACK THE CURSE OF
DEVIL'S EYE UPON US!



BUT THEY HAD WAITED TOO LONG! A FEW
MOMENTS LATER...

IT--IT'S HAPPENING! JANE WAS
TELLING ME TODAY THAT SHE'S
BEEN HEARING ABOUT VAMPIRES
AND WEREWOLVES! THEY
ONLY COME INTO BEING
DURING THE NIGHTS OF
THE NEW MOON!

THAT'S
TERRIFYING!
TODAY, THE
MOON CAME
UP!





TRUE TALES of the SUPERNATURAL

24

THE AZTEC MARCH OF MEXICO WAS CONSIDERED BY CORTES IN 1519 THE AZTECS WERE DANGEROUS FOR THE ACCUMULATION OF GOLD, SILVER, AND OTHER GREAT WEALTH, AND THEY TOOK GREAT PAINS TO HIDE THEIR TREASURE FROM THE GREEDY HANDS OF THE SPANIARDS. MANY MEN HAVE TRIED TO LOCATE THIS AZTEC TREASURE, BUT UNTIL THIS DAY NONE HAVE SUCCEEDED. HERE IS THE STRANGE TALE OF TWO SUCH MEN WHO MADE THE ATTEMPT IN 1901...

ON A SMALL MOUNTAIN THE EDGE OF A MOUNTAIN-RANGE YOUNG KEPT THE SECRET OF THE AZTEC NATION...

OLD MAN, IT IS SAID THAT YOU KNOW WHERE THE AZTEC TREASURE IS HIDDEN! I WANT YOU TO LEAD US TO IT!

THE SECRET HAS BEEN PASSED DOWN THROUGH THE YEARS TO MY GREEN HANDS WILL NOT TOUCH MY PEOPLE'S TREASURE!



IF YOU DON'T WANT THIS BOY TO DIE, YOU'LL DO AS WE SAY!

AND YOU MUST NOT HARM MY GRANDSON! HE WILL LEAD YOU TO THE TREASURE! I HAVE ENTRUSTED HIM WITH THE SECRET! I AM SCARELESS AND LAME!



THE WOMAN BOY LED THE TWO MEN INTO THE QUIET MOUNTAINS AS NIGHT FELL, THE TWO REACHED THE RUINS OF A HALF-HIDDEN AZTEC TEMPLE

THE TREASURE IS IN THIS TEMPLE! SO YOU GO IN AND LOOK AROUND! THIS MIGHT BE MY ANCESTORS USED TO MAKE THEIR HUMAN SACRIFICES HERE! A TRICK! I'LL KEEP AN EYE ON THE KID OUT HERE!



SAM RACED INTO THE TEMPLE TO BEHOLD AN ANCESTRAL AZTEC! AZTEC WARRIORS SURROUNDED HIS PARTNER, WHO WAS STRAPPED TO A SACRIFICIAL ALTAR! THE HIGH PRIEST WAS ABOUT TO PLUNGE A DAGGER INTO ED'S HEART!



IT-IT CAN'T BE! THAT HIGH PRIEST IS THE OLD MAN WE SAW BACK IN THE VILLAGE! STOP! STOP!

ED DISAPPEARED INTO THE DARKENED PASSAGE. MINUTES PASSED AND NOT A SIGN OF ED'S BOY CAME FROM THE CHIMNEY CORNER. SEARCHING!



IT'S ED! HE'S IN TROUBLE! I'M GOING IN AFTER HIM!

SAM'S ARM STROPPED AS HE WATCHED THE KNIFE DESCEND! IN WORK-FUD TERROR, HE RACED OUT OF THE TEMPLE!



SAM WAS NEVER THE SAME AFTER THAT! HE SOMEHOW REACHED CIVILIZATION, BUT HE HAD TURNED INTO A MENTAL WRECK! HE LIVED OUT THE REST OF HIS LIFE, FOMENTING VIOLENCE FOR THE HORRIBLE SCENE! AN ASTONISHING TALE FOR THE FILES OF UNEXPLAINED ANXIETY!

TRAIL of the PHANTOM GYPSY

IT'S SUCH A NASTY, VICIOUS EVENING / WHY NOT LET THE POOR GYPSIES CAMP ON OUR GROUNDS OVER NIGHT, DAD? THEY'LL BE GONE IN THE MORNING!

NEVER! THIS IS OSBORNE GROUND, AND NO DEEDARLY, THEY'VE GYPSIES WILL CAMP HERE WHILE I'M ALIVE!



SIR MALVERNE OSBORNE WAS FIERCELY PROUD OF HIS ANCESTRAL HERITAGE, THE OSBORNE ESTATE AND GROUNDS WHICH DATED BACK NINE HUNDRED YEARS. HE JEALOUSLY GUARDED EVERY ACRE OF HIS LAND, AND POACHERS OR VAGRANTS WERE HARDLY TREATED. BUT ABOVE ALL HE HATED THE ITINERANT GYPSIES WITH A THEOLOGICAL FERVOR AND DROVE THEM FROM HIS LAND IN FURY. ONE MISERABLE FOREST DAY, WHEN SIR OSBORNE WAS INFORMED OF THE PRESENCE OF GYPSIES ON HIS GROUNDS

THE FILTHY BEGGARS ARE BARRICADING THEMSELVES AT HOME ON MY LAND, BURNING MY WOOD AND LITTERING THE PLACE? I'LL SHOW THEM!

DON'T BE RASH, FATHER! IT'S ONLY FOR THE NIGHT!



I SPEAK AS THEIR QUEEN, SIR! PLEASE LET US STAY UNTIL MORNING! IT IS A DAY MY ONLY FOR BEASTS TO BE TRAVELING!

I'LL HEAR NO MORE! IF YOU'RE NOT OFF MY LAND AND ACROSS THE BOUNDARY OF THE RAILROAD TRACKS IN FIVE MINUTES, I'LL OPEN FIRE! NOW, CLEAR OUT!



SOMEONE IN A FURIOUS OUTRAGE!

YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN KNOWN AS A TYRANT AMONG MY PEOPLE / CURSED BE YOU AND YOUR KIND! MAY YOUR SINS BE VISITED ON YOUR SON AND LET HIM BE DOOMED TO WANDER LIKE AN UNWANTED STRAY, DRIVEN FROM PLACE TO PLACE!



PLEASE, I'M TERRIBLY SORRY! I-I WISH I COULD HELP!

HA HA / YES, YOU ARE CURSED, YOU FOOL! TO WANDER LIKE A POOR STRAY, SEEKING HAPPINESS, DRIVEN FROM PLACE TO PLACE IN MISERY AND FINDING ONLY DEATH AS YOUR COMFORTER!



AS THE CARRIAGE LEFT THE DOORWAY BRISTLE...

HA HA / YOU'RE AN OBSCURE CURSED TO JEREMY! DON'T THE END MAKE ME FEEL OF YOUR DAYS! THE CURSE IS MERE NONSENSE - JUST A GLAST OF FUTILITY



SOMEONE...

SWELL HEAVENS! LOOK -- THE LUGGAGE EXPRESS! THE CARRIAGE IS RIGHT IN ITS PATH AND IT'S COMING TOO FAST TO STOP!



WITH A TICKING CRASH THE LUGGAGE EXPRESS RIPPED THROUGH THE PITIFUL CARRIAGE!



SOMEONE LATER...

POOR CREATURES THERE WASN'T A SURVIVOR IN THE WHOLE LOT OF THEM!

SERVES THE BEGGARS RIGHT! THEY OUGHT TO LIVE LIKE DECENT FOLK INSTEAD OF WANDERING AROUND ON OTHER PEOPLE'S PROPERTY!



HOW CAN YOU BE SO HEARTLESS, FATHER? THAT GIRL WAS SO YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL! IT WAS CRUEL FOR HER TO DIE!

FORGET IT! SHE WAS ONLY A GYPSY!



SOME WEEKS LATER...

IT'S NO USE / I CAN'T STUDY IN THIS HOUSE ANY LONGER /

STILL OBSESSED WITH THOSE GYPSIES, EXHAUSTED, RIGHT, GO TO PARIS / STUDY AT THE GORRONE AND GET IT OUT OF YOUR SYSTEM, ONCE AND FOR ALL /



IN PARIS...

WHAT IS IT, ANDRÉ? YOU LOOK AS IF YOU'VE SEEN VENUS COME TO LIFE /

MR. MY DEAR ROOM-MATE, JEREMY / EVEN BETTER THAN THAT -- I HAVE SEEN HER DANCE /



SHE IS A THING OF BEAUTY, INTERESTING, THIS GYPSY GIRL, MARLA / WHEN SHE DANCES, THERE IS A WILD RHYTHM IN HER BODY /

VERY WELL, TONIGHT I'LL SEE YOUR MARLA /



THAT NIGHT, AT THE CAFE ZOLA...

ANDRÉ DIDN'T DO HER JUSTICE / MARLA IS THE INCARNATION OF WILD, EXOTIC RHYTHM, AND MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN WORDS CAN DESCRIBE /



BUT NOW THEY ARE ALL DANGLED FROM THE DAMNED OF JEREMY...

WH- WHY, IT CAN'T BE / I MUST BE LIVING MY MIND / BUT IT IS THE GYPSY'S DAUGHTER... THE ONE WHO CURSED ME / THEN SHE DID SURVIVE / I MUST SEE HER /



LATER...

SHE MUST COME OUT THIS WAY / IF THERE'S ANY WAY TO MAKE AMENDS FOR MY FATHER'S CRUELTY, I'LL DO IT / I WON'T REST UNTIL SHE FORGIVES ME /



BUT FROM JEREMY TOLD...

WAIT, MARLA, LET ME SPEAK TO YOU /

NO! I CAN'T SPEAK NOW! LEAVE ME ALONE /





UPON AND AGAIN THE SAME REPLY, JEREMY'S
DISFOUNDED ANSWER



YOU HARKEN NOT! I'VE ASKED
YOU THREE TIMES... NOW I
WARN YOU, WHERE DID
THE GIRL GO?

SHE WENT
THAT WAY!
HEE HEE!

IN A FLASH, JEREMY PULSED AT HIS THROAT.



YAAAAH! I'M LOSING MY MIND! IT'S
ONLY A SCARECROW I'VE BEEN
TALKING TO!

AS JEREMY WHISPERED AWAY IN SOLI



AN OLD RICKETY FRAME HOUSE! PERHAPS
THE ANSWER TO THIS PUZZLE LIES INSIDE!



THE PLACE IS ROTTING AWAY!
MARLA! IS IT REALLY YOU?



MARLA, STAY... I LOVE
YOU! I MUST
SPEAK TO YOU!

DON'T TOUCH
ME! YOU HAVE
NOT FINISHED
YOUR WHISPERING
YET!



MARLA, LOOK
OUT!

HA HA! YOU
SHALL NOT REST
UNTIL YOU HAVE
MET YOUR ONLY
COMFORTER...
DEATH!



BUT A FURTHER CRACKLED,
THE HOUSE BURST AND FLAMED!

SHE'S GONE! BURIED TO
ASHES! AND NOW THIS HOUSE
IS BLAZING AROUND ME! I
MUST ESCAPE FROM THIS
INFERNO!

THE WHOLE EVENING HAD BEEN SHEER MADNESS! WHERE AM I NOW? I'M BACK AT THE TRAIN TRACKS...



Suddenly, the horrifying figure of MARLA appeared suddenly...

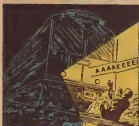
MARLA! THANK HEAVENS, YOU'RE ALIVE! THEN IT WAS ALL A HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE! GRRR... MY LEG! I'M STUCK ON THE TRACKS!



Suddenly, the light of an approaching train!

I AM CAUGHT LIKE A RAT IN A TRAP! MARLA, YOU DEVIL'S SPARK, USE YOUR FENSHU POWERS TO HELP ME!

HA HA HA!



THROUGH SIX LAYERS OF CONSCIOUSNESS, JEREMY SLOWLY AWOKE TO A TERRIBLE SCREAM IN HIS EARS...

WAKE UP, OLD MAN! YOU HAVE BEEN SCREAMING CRAZY THINGS IN YOUR DREAMS!

WHERE AM I? MARLA... THE TRAIN! BUT HERE IS HER TAMBOURINE! WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO ME?



FTER WANDERING AROUND FOR AN HOUR...

I HAVE ONLY ONE FRIEND IN PARIS— MY ROOMMATE, ANDRÉ! SURELY HE WILL REMEMBER ME AND HELP ME!



GET OUT, YOU OLD MIDNIGHT! JEREMY OSBOURNE WAS A YOUNG, HANDSOME ENGLISHMAN WHEN HE DISAPPEARED TWO YEARS AGO! NOT AN OLD SYRIS BEGGAR LIKE YOU! SO BAST, BEFORE I CALL THE POLICE!

BUT, ANDRÉ-- LISTEN TO ME!





BARGAIN WITH SATAN

Is it so strange that a man growing old and feeble, feeling at the age of 72 the clutch of death on his costive, should make a diabolical bargain in return for youth? Sir Oliver Mill was not a wicked man, not to begin with, but he was a terrified man when he thought of dying. And so it was, in desperation, that he summoned Satan.

Satan did not respond to Sir Oliver's summons immediately, however. In fact, he took his own good time in coming. But one night as Sir Oliver sat before a fire in the immense and lonely study of Kilgarth, baronet dwelling of the Hills for many generations, Satan did indeed appear. He stepped forward from the yellow and blue flames of the fire, imperceptibly dressed, almost like an English baronet of the late eight century. When he spoke, it was with courtesy, as if he were addressing an important client, and the only diabolical characteristic about him was a certain terrible intensity to his eyes, a demonically insistent twist to his mouth. "Good evening, Sir Oliver," said Satan. "I believe you wished to see me about an important piece of business."

"Why—ah, yes," said Sir Oliver. "Only—only, I expected somehow that Satan would have a different appearance."

"Nonsense," replied Satan, taking a seat in front of the fireplace and carefully crossing his legs. "I am, like you, a gentleman. A gentleman's gentleman. Your servant, sir," Satan laughed silently as if he were enjoying an immense joke.

"The fact is," said Sir Oliver, "I must have fifty years of my life to live over again. I mean? Please. I cannot die until I have finished all the work I have planned for my beloved estate."

"Impossible," said Satan. "Thirty years is the best I can do for you under the circumstances. Instead of being 72, you will be 42 years old. A age ago, sir. A vigorous age."

Sir Oliver thought for a moment. Forty-two was not so old at that. Spring would blow in from the Cornish Coast and had his young again. His days would be filled with new projects for his beloved estate of Kilgarth. Suddenly a cunning smile came to Sir Oliver's lips. "What, sir, do you demand in return? Naturally, there is a change."

"Naturally," said Satan. "You must sacrifice the life of a beautiful woman equal in years to the time I grant you to re-live. You must kill a youngish

woman of 30, no more, no less."

Sir Oliver was a clever man and a moderately selfish man, but he was not wicked—at least, not yet. The idea of murder, especially the murder of a young and beautiful woman, was repulsive. And so Sir Oliver laughed. He actually laughed in Satan's face. But Satan laughed, too, because he knew Sir Oliver better than Sir Oliver knew himself.

Stepping to the edge of the fireplace, and laughing with a great and sounding mirth, Satan raised around for the last time. "Then, sir, it is a bargain." And with this Satan disappeared into the fire.

Once alone, Sir Oliver was bewildered. What did Satan mean, he asked himself? Had made no bargain. Hadn't he actually laughed at the Devil's terms? Thirty years in return for a woman's life, in return for murdering a woman like his own dear Millicent? It was absurd to think of killing someone like his charming niece who was exactly thirty years old.

Yes, Sir Oliver was no longer laughing. He felt strangely young again. He looked at his hands, stretched his arms, rubbed to the mirror and looked at his face. It was, miraculously, the face he'd known thirty years ago. **THE DEVIL HAD ALREADY YIELDED HIM THIRTY YEARS!** But thirty years without demanding one drop of blood in advance payment! The Devil had given him youth, and just as easily—just as easily—could take it away again. Sir Oliver was agitated at the thought. He suddenly understood that he'd rather die than part with a single week of the appetizing new life he possessed. It was then that Sir Oliver wondered what it would be like to kill . . . to kill, perhaps, a woman like Millicent, his charming niece.

Little more than a week passed, then, when one splendid evening Sir Oliver and his niece—who lived at Kilgarth—were passing down a long avenue of direction which ended in a dense thicket surrounding a bog. This bog had long been an obstacle with the arch baronet of Kilgarth. Some day, he had always told himself, he would drain all but the quackend center of the bog and clear away the wilderness of scrub around it.

"Now, I shall most certainly start clearing and draining," Sir Oliver was telling his niece as they neared the end of the thicket avenue.

Millicent looked anxiously at her uncle. "I can't understand the change that's come over you in the

last week," she said, "You even look young. Not a day over 40, Uncle."

"Not a day over 40," he corrected. "The fact is, my dear, I've seen the devil of a fine specimen." Sir Oliver laughed long at this. His whole body shook. . . . with the same voiceless mirth of Saba.

Millicent turned to her Uncle in surprise. Sir Oliver saw that she was alarmed by his laughter and his mouth only opened until it seemed that he would surely burst unless he made a sound. Sir Oliver noted the fear that crept into Millicent's face, the panic that lighted her eyes. She trembled like a frightened hare.

"The devil of it is, though," he said, "my fellow is frightfully expensive. Moreover, there's no getting around his terror." Sir Oliver had stopped laughing now.

Millicent was afraid. Terribly afraid. She wanted to run, but her legs refused to move. "You are trembling, my dear." Sir Oliver came closer to Millicent. It was only a step. I have in my hands. Indeed, Sir Oliver held a glistening spade in his hands. He had picked it up from behind the last tree in the row of chestnuts.

Finally Millicent found her voice. It rose in a terrible scream. She had turned to run when the garden spade struck her back on the neck from behind. Millicent Hall, aged 30, was in a bright pool of blood and a few minutes later her uncle had buried her in the darkness along with the shovel that had ended her life.

The fact that Millicent was now dead scarcely bothered Sir Oliver at all as he strode vigorously toward Kilgarth Hall. The stream of blood on his shoes and on his fashionable waist of no consequence he would merely say that he had killed a hare fox and thrown it into the bog. It was well known how fond he was of his mice—and even if there were suspects, Sir Oliver knew that a body would have to be produced before he could be proven guilty of his crime. Thirty years? A wonderful thirty years that he could hope spend entirely making all the expensive mews that he had dreamed of for his beloved Kilgarth.

However, it was then that a terrible and unexpected thing happened. At the moment that Sir Oliver understood what it was, he cursed himself heartily for trusting Saba. Sir Oliver remembered the cast of the Devil's face—his eyes, his mouth, the face of a completely unrepentant man.

The servants noticed first and were horrified. And then Sir Oliver looked behind and saw the footprints

of blood that he left wherever he walked. Suddenly afraid, he wiped his shoes on a rug, but, so much as he wiped and scraped, the blood still came off his shoes. Frantic, he took off his shoes in the privacy of the library where he had met Saba and buried them into the fire where they were completely consumed. Shaking uncontrollably, but somewhat relieved, Sir Oliver put on another pair of boots. . . . and it was then that he realized that with 30 years more life he had purchased also an irreducible stamp of guilt. From that moment forward, whatever he stepped, footprints of blood followed in his wake.

Cats now were the Broomer's dreams of improving Kilgarth. Although it was impossible for anyone to prove that he had murdered his niece, it was also impossible to remain in the same house with servants who looked accusingly at his every move. It was impossible to direct workmen who disregarded his orders with cold contempt or to live with neighbors who turned their heads in scorn whenever he approached in desperation. Sir Oliver dismissed all his servants and abandoned all work on Kilgarth. He even left off going anywhere in public and shut himself up as a hermit in Kilgarth, around which the weeds now began to grow. The Hall itself fell into desuetude after several years, and Sir Oliver, no longer able to bear the sight of the man his niece and his bloody footprints had brought about, decided there was nothing to do but abandon the Hall itself and go into exile.

When Sir Oliver went into exile—somewhere in the mountains of Italy—he was still young and vigorous, scarcely 45 years old. His head was steady, his step firm, his eyes clear. But from the moment he left Kilgarth on his way to Italy, he took to an invalid's chair to avoid the mark of his guilt. Thereafter, he never rose from this chair except to get into bed at night.

Years later—people in the neighborhood who still remembered him said that he must have been over a hundred years old—Sir Oliver returned from exile. Then, for the first time in many years, he rose from his invalid's chair in the midst of Kilgarth's destruction and walked down the avenue of chestnuts, now tangled with tall weeds and scrub. At the end of the avenue was the same thicket, only smaller now. And only the bog was unchanged. With every step leaving behind his terrible mark of guilt, Sir Oliver walked to the very edge of the bog with tottering steps. With tears in his eyes, which was the self-pity of an old man who should be celebrating this particular spring day in such a manner, Sir Oliver stepped into the bog and sank from sight.

The reputation of the county put down the age of Sir Oliver's demise at 100, but Sir Oliver—and Saba, of course—knew that he was no more than 70 when he celebrated his birthday by taking his life.

The BEDEVILED BATTALION

THAT MAN IN THE UNIFORM OF THE FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION! HE LOOKS EXACTLY LIKE JIM! AND HE TURNED WHEN I CALLED JIM'S NAME! I'VE GOT TO GET TO HIM! OH, WHY IS HE RUNNING FROM ME?



ONE YEAR AGO, WHILE SHOPPING AS TOURISTS IN THE NATIVE QUARTER OF A FLEETING NORTH AFRICAN SEAPORT, NITA KARDON, YOUNG AMERICAN SCHOOL TEACHER, BECAME SEPARATED FROM HER FIANCEE, JIM SANDERS. SHE NEVER SAW NOR HEARD FROM HIM AGAIN. HE SEEMED TO HAVE VANISHED INTO THIN AIR. NOW, A YEAR LATER, ON ANOTHER SUMMER CRUISE, NITA WAS SHOPPING IN THE NATIVE BAZAAR OF THAT SAME TOWN, HOPING ALSO TO FIND SOME CLUE AS TO JIM'S MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE, WHEN SUDDENLY SHE THOUGHT SHE SAW HIM...

THAT MAN WHO LOOKED EXACTLY LIKE MY JIM CAME INTO THIS CURIO SHOP! HE CAN'T GET AWAY FROM ME NOW!

YES, MISS? WHAT IS YOUR PLEASURE?



BUT I'M SURE HE CAME IN HERE! A TALL, BLOND, HANDSOME MAN IN A LEGIONNAIRE'S UNIFORM! PERHAPS HE WENT THROUGH TO THAT BACK ROOM!

NO SUCH MAN ENTERED THIS SHOP, MISS! WAIT! DO NOT GO BACK THERE! IT IS FORBIDDEN!





HE DID COME BACK HERE / JAN / IT—IT'S
HITA! TURN AROUND AND LET ME LOOK
AT YOU!



YOU—YOU'RE NOT JAN / YOU'RE
SOMEBODY WHO'S BEEN LONG
DEAD! GREEEEY!!



WHAT HAPPENED
BACK HERE? I
CAME BACK AND
FOUND YOU ON
THE FLOOR! YOU
HUST'VE PAINTED!

THERE WAS
SOME HORRIBLE
CREATURE BACK
HERE! BUT—BUT
HE'S GONE NOW!
THAT PAINTING!
IT'S A PERFECT
PORTRAIT OF
MY JAN!



AH, YES / ONE OF MY HUMBLE
EFFORTS AS AN ARTIST! THAT IS
WHY I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO COME
BACK HERE / I AM ALWAYS
EMBARRASSED ABOUT MY HOBBY
OF PAINTING!

TELL ME ABOUT
THE SUBJECT OF THIS
PORTRAIT / I'M CERTAIN
IT'S JAN!



I DO NOT KNOW HIS NAME /
THIS LESSENAIME VISITED MY
SHOP OFTEN, AND I FINALLY
PREVAILED UPON HIM TO LET
ME DO HIS PORTRAIT! HE
WAS VERY STRANGE /
APPARENTLY HE HAD BEEN
BEATEN AND ROBBED HERE
IN THE QUARTER, BEFORE
JOINING THE LEGION! HE DID
NOT EVEN REMEMBER HIS
OWN NAME!



TELL ME MORE
ABOUT HIM! I'M
SURE NOW THAT
HE WAS JAN!

ALAS, THERE IS NOT MUCH MORE
TO TELL / THIS YOUNG LEGION-
NAIRE WAS KILLED IN A BATTLE
WITH A DECENT RENEGADE TRIBE
ABOUT SIX MONTHS AGO AND
BURIED AT AN OASIS NEAR PORT
DUCHAME!



A LITTLE LATER, AT COMMAND HEADQUARTERS
OF THE CHOICE FOREIGN LEGION.

SORRY, MADAMMOISSELLE, BUT WE HAVE NO
RECORD OF A MAN NAMED JAN SANDERS / BUT
THAT MEANS NOTHING. AS YOU KNOW, MANY
OF OUR MEN SIGN UP
UNDER FALSE NAMES!

I SEE / THANK YOU!

PARDON, MADAMEISELLE--I HEARD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR FRIENDS TO THE SERGEANT / I BELIEVE SUCH A MAN WAS IN MY COMPANY. DO YOU HAVE HIS PICTURE ?

OH--YES / I HAVE AN OIL PAINTING WHICH IS AN EXCELLENT LIKENESS /



SACRE BLEU / TAKE IT AWAY / IT IS A PICTURE OF ONE OF THE BATTALION OF THE UNDEAD /

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT ? WHAT IS THE MATTER ?



HOW HORRIBLE / THE FACE OF A DECAYING CORPSE-- JUST LIKE THE UNDEAD CREATURE I SAW IN THE BACK OF THE NATIVE SHOP / THIS CAN'T BE THE PORTRAIT I BOUGHT !



BUT THEN, AS NYRA STARED TRANQUILLY AT THE PORTRAIT, IT BEGAN TO CHANGE ONCE MORE, BACK TO THE HANDSOME FEATURES OF JIM SARGERS, HER MISSING PRINCE !



MY EYES ARE PLAYING TRICKS ON ME / THE PICTURE COULD NOT HAVE CHANGED / I'VE GOT TO FIND OUT JIM'S FATE / PERHAPS THIS LEGIONNAIRE CAN HELP ME !



FORT DUCHAINE ? WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO GO THERE ? THE FORT IS AN EVIL PLACE, NO LONGER OCCUPIED BY THE LEGION / IT IS HAUNTED BY THE UNDEAD, SOUL-LESS

OUTTHROATS, THIEVES AND MURDERERS, WHO JOINED THE LEGION TO ESCAPE PUNISHMENT AND NOW LIVE IN ETERNAL UNREST !



NYRA TRIES TO HIRE A GUIDE, BUT...

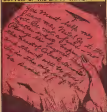
I'LL PAY TRIPLE YOUR USUAL FEE IF YOU'LL TAKE ME TO FORT DUCHAINE !

TRIPLE FEE PAH ! I HAVE WEAKENED ! BUT ON ONE THING I INSIST-- WE MUST BE GONE FROM THAT UNHOLY PLACE BY SUNDOWN !





STARTLED, TREMBLING, SHE READ THE WEIRD NOTE, WRITTEN IN BLOOD, AND IN JAN SANDER'S FAMILIAR HAND-WRITING, THAT SHE FOUND IN THE BOTTOM OF THE EMPTY CASKET!



NOW THAT THE SUN HAS FULLY SET, THE FORT SEEMS TO HAVE COME TO LIFE! I HEAR BUBBLE NOTES-- BUBBLES-- AS THE LIGOR FLAG IS RUN UP! HOW STRANGE! BUT I MUST DO WHAT JAN'S NOTE SAID!



I MUST SEE A COLONEL. SURELY IS SUCH A MAN HERE?



YOU--YOU ARE NOT HUMAN? I--I'M SORRY! I'VE CHANGED MY MIND! LET ME OUT OF HERE!

IT IS TOO LATE! THE COLONEL WOULD NOT WANT TO MISS SEEING YOU AND WELCOMING YOU TO OUR BATTALION OF THE UNDEAD!



I BRING YOU A PRETTY VISITOR FROM THE OTHER WORLD, COLONEL SIVARLO!

YOU--YOU HAVE THE FACE OF SATAN!



LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT OUR STRANGE BATTALION! ALL THE MONSIEURS, GENTLEMEN WHO JOINED THE FOREIGN LEGION TO ESCAPE PUNISHMENT, MADE A PACT WITH ME, THAT THEY WOULD ESCAPE ETERNAL DOOM UPON THEIR MORTAL DEATH BY SERVING IN MY BATTALION OF THE UNDEAD!



BUT WHY? WHAT DO YOU ACCOMPLISH WITH ALL THIS?

NOTHING, YET! BUT WHEN WE RECRUIT ANOTHER 100 MEMBERS, BRING THE BATTALION TO FULL STRENGTH, THEN WE WILL BEGIN OUR CAMPAIGN! WE WILL RAID THE COASTAL TOWNS AND CAPTURE THE MANY EVIL SOULS WHO HAVE BEEN EVADING ME BY LIVING TOO LONG!

THE UNDEAD GRILL AND PREPARE FOR THIS CAMPAIGN! WHEN WE START THE RAIDS, EVERY EVIL PERSON THEY KILL BECOMES ONE OF MY SLAVES IN THE NETHER REGIONS, AND FOR EACH KILLING, THE UNDEAD LEGIONNAIRE HAS HIS TIME BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH PROLONGED!



HOW CRUELTY!
WHO IS THAT MAN
STRETCHED ACROSS THE
WHEEL?

AN UNUSUAL CASE! IN A BATTLE
AGAINST DESERT RENEGADES,
WOUNDED, HE SOUGHT REFUGE HERE
IN THE FORT-- WAS FINALLY KILLED
HERE--WHICH PUT HIM IN MY
POWER! LOOK AT HIM THROUGH
THESE GLASSES!



THROUGH THE GLASSES, AYTA SAW WITH DECREASING
HORROR, THAT THE LEGIONNAIRE SPREAD-EAGLED IN
PUNISHMENT, WAS NONE OTHER THAN HER FIANCE,
JAN SANDERS!



YES! HE IS THE YOUNG AMERICAN, JAN SANDERS!
BUT HE IS NOT A TRUE MEMBER OF OUR BAT-
TALION OF THE UNDEAD, BECAUSE HE WAS
GUILTY OF NO CRIME BEFORE JOINING THE
LEGION!



OF COURSE NOT! JAN WAS
A GOOD MAN! YOU MUST
RELEASE HIM!

NO! WE NEED EVERY SINGLE RECRUIT WE
HAVE DONE EVERYTHING TO MAKE HIM TRULY ONE
OF US BY COMMITTING A CRIME UPON DESERT
TRAVELERS! BUT THE POOR REFUGES--
EVENTUALLY WE WILL BREAK HIM!



AND YOU WILL HELP US! PERHAPS
WHEN LEGIONNAIRE SANDERS SEES
YOU TORTURED, HE WILL NOT
BE SO STRONG-WILLED?



GET AWAY
FROM ME, YOU
EVIL CREATURE!

MOH! HELP ME WITH THIS LITTLE
SPRITRE! WE WILL USE HER
TO BREAK THE SOUL OF THAT
REBEL MORTAL, JAN SANDERS!

THE RAYONET
FROM JAN'S CASSET!
IF I CAN SLIP IT
DOWN FROM MY
SLEEVE IN TIME!



NO! NO! DO NOT
HARM OUR COLOMEL,
THE PRINCE OF
DARKNESS!

DON'T! WAIT! NOT
THAT, OR I...
AIEEE EEE!



YOU—YOU HAVE ROBBED ME, TEMPORARILY, OF MY
POWER AMONG MORTALS! NOW I'LL BE RETURNED
TO THE NETHER REGIONS, PERHAPS NEVER TO
COME BACK HERE! OHMMN!



HE—HE DISINTEGRATED—VANISHED IN A
PUFF OF FOUL-SMELLING SMOKE! AND THE
UNDEAD LEGIONNAIRES—THEY HAVE
RETURNED TO THE NATURAL STATE
OF THE LONG DECEASED!



JAN HAS DISAPPEARED! I'LL
GO TO HIS GRAVE! PERHAPS
HE IS AT REST AGAIN, NOW!



IT IS POOR, DEAR JAN! THE RING
I GAVE HIM IS STILL UPON HIS
FINGER! BUT AT LEAST I KNOW
NOW THAT HIS SOUL IS AT PEACE!
HE HAS BEEN RELEASED FROM
THE SPELL OF COLOMEL
GIALALO!



A LITTLE LATER, MRS. GARDEN
WAS PICKED UP BY TWO LEGION-
NAIRES OF NIGHT FATHER, AND
TAKEN BACK TO THE COMING
TOWN.

JAN'S PORTRAIT SEEMS TO BE
SMILING, AND I SEEM TO HEAR
HIS VOICE, THANKING ME!



THANK YOU,
MY DARLING!

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